

AN ACT concerning State government.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois is amended by adding Section 605-1057 as follows:

(20 ILCS 605/605-1057 new)

Sec. 605-1057. State-designated cultural districts.

(a) As used in this Section, "State-designated cultural district" means a geographical area certified under this Section that has a distinct, historic, and cultural identity. Municipalities or 501(c)(3) organizations working on behalf of a certified geographical area should seek to:

(1) Promote a distinct historic and cultural community.

(2) Encourage economic development and supports entrepreneurship in the geographic area and community.

(3) Encourage the preservation and development of historic and culturally significant structures, traditions, and languages.

(4) Foster local cultural development and education.

(5) Provide a focal point for celebrating and strengthening the unique cultural identity of the

community.

(6) Promote growth and opportunity without generating displacement or expanding inequality.

(b) Administrative authority. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity shall establish criteria and guidelines for State-designated cultural districts by rule in accordance with qualifying criteria outlined in subsection (c). In executing its powers and duties under this Section, the Department shall:

(1) establish a competitive application system by which a community may apply for certification as a State-designated cultural district;

(2) provide technical assistance for State-designated cultural districts by collaborating with all relevant offices and grantees of the Department to help them identify and achieve their goals for cultural preservation, including, but not limited to, promotional support of State-designated cultural districts and support for small businesses looking to access resources;

(3) collaborate with other State agencies, units of local government, community organizations, and private entities to maximize the benefits of State-designated cultural districts; and

(4) establish an advisory committee to advise the Department on program rules and the certification process. The advisory committee shall reflect the diversity of the

State of Illinois, including geographic, racial, and ethnic diversity. The advisory committee must include:

(A) a representative of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity appointed by the Director;

(B) a representative of the Department of Agriculture appointed by the Director of Agriculture;

(C) a representative of the Illinois Housing Development Authority appointed by the Executive Director of the Illinois Housing Development Authority;

(D) two members of the House of Representatives appointed one each by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;

(E) two members of the Senate appointed one each by the President of the Senate and the Minority Leader of the Senate; and

(F) four community representatives appointed by the Governor representing diverse racial, ethnic, and geographic groups not captured in the membership of the other designees, with the input of community and stakeholder groups.

(c) Certification. A geographical area within the State may be certified as a State-designated cultural district by applying to the Department for certification. Certification as a State-designated cultural district shall be for a period of

10 years, after which the district may renew certification every 5 years. A municipality or 501(c)(3) organization may apply for certification on behalf of a geographic area. The applying entity is responsible for complying with reporting requirements under subsection (f). The Department shall develop criteria to assess whether an applicant qualifies for certification under this Section. That criteria must include a demonstration that the applicant and the community:

(1) have been historically impacted and are currently at risk of losing their cultural identity because of gentrification, displacement, or the COVID-19 pandemic;

(2) can demonstrate a history of economic disinvestment; and

(3) can demonstrate strong community support for the cultural district designation through active and formal participation by community organizations and municipal and regional government agencies or officials.

(d) Each applicant shall be encouraged by the Department to:

(1) have development plans that include and prioritize the preservation of local businesses and retention of existing residents and businesses; and

(2) have an education framework in place informed with a vision of food justice, social justice, community sustainability, and social equity.

(e) The Department shall award no more than 5

State-designated cultural districts every year. At no point shall the total amount of State-designated cultural districts be more than 15, unless otherwise directed by the Director of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in consultation with the advisory committee.

(f) Within 12 months after being designated a cultural district, the State-designated cultural district shall submit a report to the Department detailing its current programs and goals for the next 4 years of its designation. For each year thereafter that the district remains a State-designated cultural district, it shall submit a report to the Department on the status of the program and future developments of the district. Any State-designated cultural district that fails to file a report for 2 consecutive years shall lose its status.

(g) This Section is repealed on July 1, 2031.